VIKINGS OF THE STARS

KINGSMILL COMMANDER

VIKINGS OF THE STARS

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THE WORLD A-WING

Page 78

VIKINGS OF THE STARS

KINGSMILL COMMANDER

ILLUSTRATED BY
J. AUGUSTUS KNAPP
PALMS, CALIFORNIA

NEW YORK HAROLD VINAL LTD
1928

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TITLE-PAGE ORNAMENT
DESIGNED BY
MAY WARNER
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

ZINC ETCHINGS BY
WASHINGTON ENGRAVING CO.,
1010½ A STREET,
TACOMA, WASHINGTON

ELECTROTYPES OF ILLUSTRATIONS BY
TACOMA ELECTROTYPE CO.,
707 COMMERCE STREET,
TACOMA, WASHINGTON

PRINTED AND BOUND IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY THE VAIL-BALLOU PRESS, BINGHAMTON, N. Y.

To

Lynn of the Songs

through whom

The White Bird

sings;

And to the heroes of the Starry Way
(Deathless the shining names in that array)
Who, through years past as in the present day,
Spent thought, work, life in glorious essay
To give our world its wings.

FOREWORD

The subject of aviation is as vast and fascinating as the ocean in which the planes live and move and have their being.

I realize keenly how inadequate these poems are to convey more than a faint suggestion of the reactions induced by a study of the achievements of the explorers and the navigators of the air.

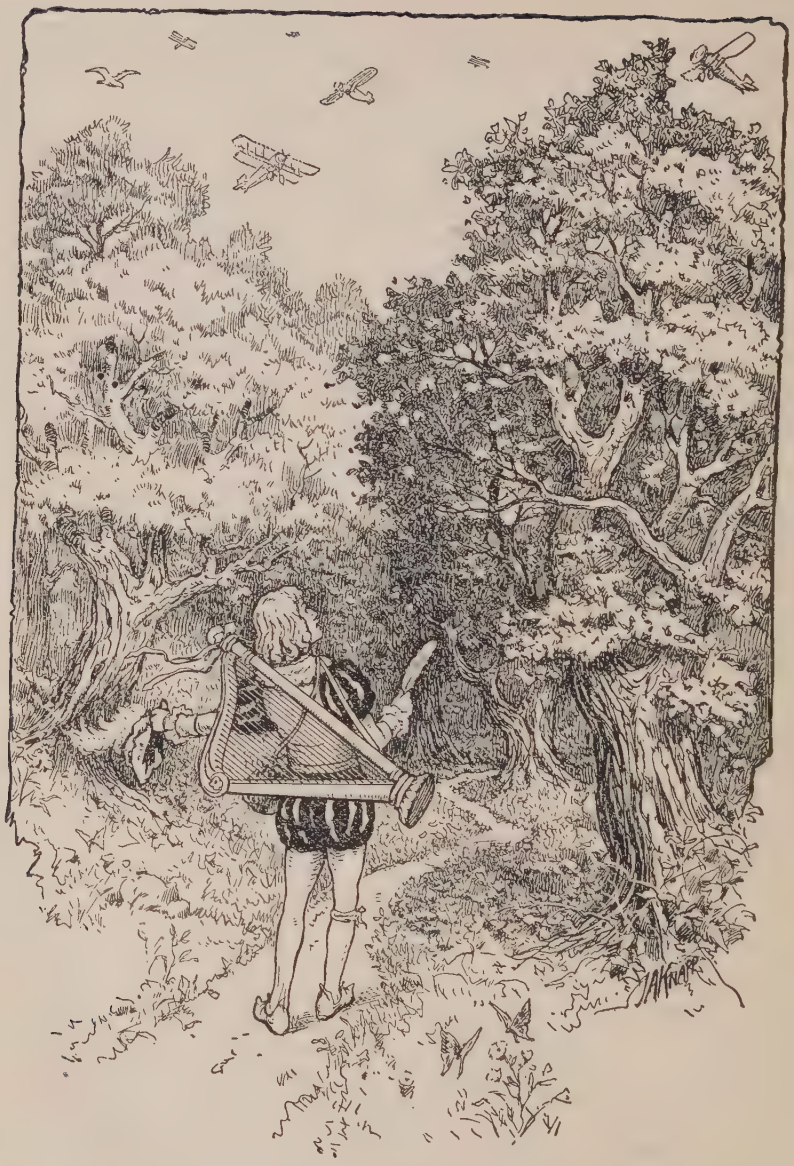
The subject is so overpowering in its multiplex phases that it has been found possible to set down only a few of its more obvious aspects, but it is hoped that they will convey somewhat of that which has, perforce, been left unsung.

In the back of the book will be found a few notes which the general reader may find helpful.

KINGSMILL COMMANDER

Tacoma, State
of Washington,
U. S. A.
August 18th, 1928

The Enchanted Plume



" . . . lo! all the arching blue
Was instant filled with humming, whirling wings"

The Enchanted Plume

Upon a day, Dreamer the Songsmith—bound
(With Inkhorn, Harp and Quill) the greenwood
through—
As on he wandered, spied upon the ground
A beauteous plume, all spotless white in hue.

He picked it up—lo! all the arching blue
Was instant filled with humming, whirling wings;
He thrilled with rapture—old, yet ever new—
As once again to him the White Bird sings.

He cleft the quill that tipped the plume so white;
With skilful blade he shaped it to a pen;
Then strove with joyous, eager hand to write
The White Bird's songs for all the sons of men.

Too great the task. None but a Master's skill
Could scribe the witching wonder of those lays; . . .
Yet let these far-off echoes witness still
The homage due the brave; their power to fill
The heart with courage; make the spirit thrill
To daring deeds.
By Inkhorn, Harp and Quill
And Mystic Plume, All Hail their dauntless Will! . . .
To them our fealty, our love, our praise.

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Wings

"To Fly! . . . Who hath not often longed for this?"

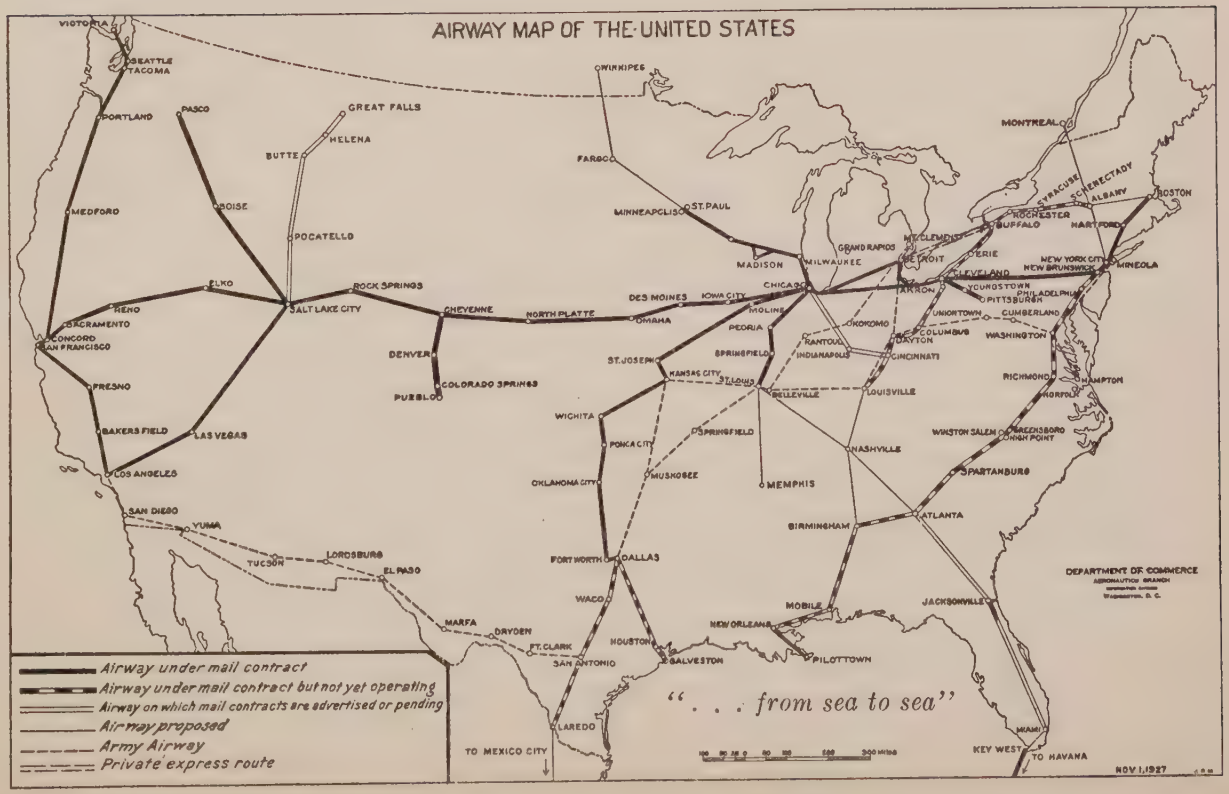
Wings

TO FLY! . . . Blest vision of ecstatic bliss!
"Of the earth earthy" things to leave on earth
Of none account, base dross of little worth,
Cast into limbo's bottomless abyss;
To meet in air Aurora's rosy kiss;
To some fair land where Beauty hath her birth,
Where every zephyr breathes of raptured mirth,
To soar! . . . Who hath not often longed for this?

'Tis but the mem'ry of supernal dawns
When, freed from flesh, the spirit dwelt afar
In finer kingdoms, fair Avilions, . . .
Again returning to this lesser star
For further knowledge of the Laws That Are,
From realms beyond the blue Septentrions.

VIKINGS OF THE STARS

RIDERS OF THE SKY


AIRWAY MAP OF THE UNITED STATES
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PORTLAND
PASCO
GREAT FALLS
HELENA
BUTTE
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BOISE
POCATELLO
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FARGO
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ST. PAUL
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MILWAUKEE
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PITTSBURGH
CUMBERLAND
WASHINGTON
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COLUMBUS
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INDIANAPOLIS
RICHMOND
HAMPTON
NORFOLK
WINSTON SALEM
GREENSBORO
HIGH POINT
SPARTANBURG
ATLANTA
JACKSONVILLE
MIAMI
KEY WEST
TO HAVANA
CHICAGO
DES MOINES
IOWA CITY
MOLINE
PEORIA
OKOKOMO
SPRINGFIELD
BELLEVILLE
LOUISVILLE
NASHVILLE
MEMPHIS
BIRMINGHAM
MOBILE
NEW ORLEANS
PILOTTOWN
OMAHA
NORTH PLATTE
CHEYENNE
DENVER
COLORADO SPRINGS
PUEBLO
ROCK SPRINGS
SALT LAKE CITY
ELKO
RENO
SACRAMENTO
CONCORD
SAN FRANCISCO
FRESNO
BAKERS FIELD
LAS VEGAS
LOS ANGELES
SAN DIEGO
YUMA
TUCSON
LORDSBURG
EL PASO
MARFA
DRYDEN
FT. CLARK
SAN ANTONIO
HOUSTON
GALVESTON
LAREDO
TO MEXICO CITY
FORT WORTH
DALLAS
WACO
WICHITA
PONCA CITY
OKLAHOMA CITY
MUSKOGEE
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Airway under mail contract
Airway under mail contract but not yet operating
Airway on which mail contracts are advertised or pending
Airway proposed
Army Airway
Private express route
"... from sea to sea"
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
AERONAUTICS BRANCH
NOV 1, 1927

RIDERS OF THE SKY

Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds.
—Herodotus

"HASTE! Haste! Post-Haste! Upon thy life
"See that thou tarry not!"
Such was the cry of olden time
When, with impatience hot,
The rider with dispatches grave
Urged on his smoking steed
With voice and whip and armèd heel,
Through mud and mire, through woe and weal,
The Scrolls, each graced with lordly seal,
Bearing at utmost speed.

"Post-Haste!"—the cry of yesterday;
"Post-Haste!"—the cry today.
"The Scrolls! The Scrolls! At risk of life
"Speed them without delay!"
Not through the Forest Perilous
The post rides, as of yore,
But on great birds—vast wondrous things

Whose speed the very wind outwings
As through their shining plumes it sings—
They hum from shore to shore.

With Scrolls of labor, gold and gear,
Of laughter, joy and pain,
Of love and vision, life and death,
They flash from main to main.
O'er forests lone; o'er city hives;
O'er farmstead, garth and lea;
From North to South beside the main;
O'er snow-crowned peak and fertile plain
From East to West and back again,
They sing from sea to sea.

At airports here and there they pause,
Down-gliding from on high, . . .
Leave Scrolls and take new burdens on—
Post-Riders of the Sky.
Then, be the hour what it may, . . .
On!—On!—or foul or fair!
For light or dark, for soon or late,
Heat, cold or storm they will not wait,
But flash away to joust with Fate—
Bold Couriers of the Air.

*

Knights-Errant of the trackless trails,
By whom the Scrolls are sped,

Before your eyes, as on you fly,
What history lies spread!
From Boston Bay to Golden Gate;
The Gulf to 49;
From '76 to '27;
From tallow-dips to storming heaven
(Prometheus-like) for fiery leaven, . . .
The records 'neath you shine.

And none of all our heroes bold,
We fervently believe,
Have wrought more gallantly than you,
As fearlessly you cleave
On pinions broad those airy realms
Through which the cosmos rolls.
Our love and admiration, too,
Are yours, in fullest measure due
For your brave lives of derring-do, . . .
Knights of the Flying Scrolls.

THE TREASURE SHIP

A Song of the Wingèd Argosies

WITH lamp of brilliant ruby light
And one of emerald shining bright
From out the gloomy shades of night
The Mail Plane comes aflying

With precious cargo through the dark.
Right joyful eyes are they that mark
Her progress as that Treasure Bark,
The Mail Plane, comes aflying.

"A Treasure Ship!"—amazed, you cry.
Yes. Harken and I'll tell you why.
With riches more than earth could buy
The Mail Plane comes aflying.

Ne'er trireme in the days of yore,
When homeward-bound from foreign shore,
Bore richer lading in her store
Than on the Plane comes flying.

Tidings of loved ones manywhere,
News of our ventures here and there—

Fast speeding to us through the air—
Upon the Plane come flying.

The jeweled lights sweep circling round;
The landing place is duly found
And, gliding gently to the ground,
The Mail Plane rests from flying.

We greet her with a gladsome hail.
The far-brought sacks of precious mail
That traveled o'er the airy trail
Upon the Mail Plane flying,

Strong, waiting hands to safety bear;
The outbound sacks are stowed with care;
Then, droning through the midnight air,
Again the Plane goes flying.

*

O gems, agleam the great bird o'er;
O pilot with your wingèd lore;
O signal lights along the shore,
(As speeds the Mail Plane flying)—

O beacon bright that, flashing, swings;
O mystic ray the ether flings
To guide the great untiring wings
As fast the Plane goes flying, . . .

Guard ye the ship! Our heroes keep
From perils of the Upper Deep,
That we may not for sorrow weep
Caused by the Mail Plane's flying.

God keep and speed them back again—
True paladins of heart and brain
Who brave for us the Starry Main, . . .
Upon the Mail Planes flying.

THE EXPLORERS

A Song of The Wayleaders

Its chant of joyous strength the motor sings;
The captive whirlwind, aureole of sound,
Spins at the prow, impatient of the earth.
Released, adown the field the great bird speeds—
Up . . . and away; . . . a speck; . . . then lost to sight.

Yet back of drone of motor, roar of wheel;
Behind the outer noise and rush and hum—
Proof manifest unto a watching world
Of strength triumphant o'er another realm;
Behind this marvel . . . launching puny man—
Weak, earthborn man—as rival to the birds . . .
Lies something greater, working quietly,
Without or crowd or pomp or circumstance—
The wondrous, mighty, silent power of thought.

Thought and endeavor labored through the years—
Long, grinding years of ever-faithful toil,
Patient experiment and hope deferred.
Some wrought till death, nor saw the East aglow;

One saw the sunrise, viewed the Promised Land,
But did not live till he could walk therein.

The patient work went on.
At last man flew.
A tiny flight at first, like fledgling bird—
Then down again to earth . . . yet *he had flown.*
The new Columbus of th'Uncharted Sea
Had sailed and hailed his new San Salvador.

The way was shown; the work went on apace,
Till now, in barely five-and-twenty years,
The air is vibrant with the hum of wings;
Man's thoughts and hopes have flown to greater heights;
Gained overlook, horizons farther-flung.
And through the ruck and welter of the world,
The sordid scheming and the selfish strife,
The fogs of foul injustice that arise
To hide the blue and lead the folk astray,
The Star of Brotherhood more brightly shines,
The world draws nearer to the Golden Year.

And, as of old, so is it true today—
The noiseless power is the greater far . . .
Behind the plane fast roaring through the sky,
The silent Thinker in the quiet room.

The mind, the spirit—never to be weighed,
Nor touched, nor seen, nor measured, nor cognized
By figures nor by markings on a dial—
Are Rulers of the Outer Elements.

That which is seen is temporal, will fade;
But the unseen Reality which stands
Behind the curtain of the world we see—
The Thinker, Dreamer . . . he who builds his thought,
Who shapes his dream and says to it: "Go forth
"And witness bear before the sons of men;"—
Who dares to say *that* Dreamer e'er can die?
Nay, rather, when his body is outworn
And can no longer serve to work his will,
He will withdraw till the appointed time,
Then take another body, new and strong,
Wherein again to live and think and plan; . . .
Dream nobler dreams; sound deeper seas of thought;
Still farther sail; still newer worlds explore.

THE FLAGSHIP

A Song of Nineteen-Three

WHEN you wing your way from East to West; when you flash from North to South;
When you speed afar like a shooting star, or a bolt from a cannon's mouth;
When you win the Derby or Schneider race—whatever the prize may be;
When you reach your goal—at Line or Pole or the Islands of the Sea;
When you span the oceans and cleave the skies like an arrow from the bow,
Remember the Flagship Kitty Hawk, of Dayton, O-hi-o . . .
(The Admiral's Flagship, Kitty Hawk, of Dayton, O-hi-o.)

When you start your single motor, or your three begin to thrill;
When you guide a landplane as you wish or a seaplane as you will;
When you're on a jaunt, or an air mail route, or mapping for survey,
Altitude flying, or dusting—be your work whatso it may;

Whether you're doing it fast or slow, or flying high or low,
Remember the Flagship Kitty Hawk, of Dayton, O-hi-o . . .
(From Palos Port—the Kitty Hawk, of Dayton, O-hi-o.)

The planes, world-o'er, that dare the night, or greet the sun at morn . . .
Her children, all—'twas from her womb each one of them was born.
She was the first to ride the waves of that vast limpid sea
Through which the worlds swing ever on through all eternity.

*

So don't forget, no matter where in flying craft you go,
You owe it to the Kitty Hawk, of Dayton, O-hi-o . . .
(Columbus' Flagship, Kitty Hawk, of Dayton, O-hi-o.)

WEAVERS OF DREAMS

Passenger and Mail Planes of the World

WEAVERS of Dreams, you trace your airy courses
Wondrous as genie to The Lamp a slave;
By force of mind you conquer Nature's forces,
Speeding your cargoes over land and wave.

World-wide, the peoples hear your pinions humming,
Like to a thousand thousand swarming bees,
As you, from port to port, are going, coming,
Braving the perils of the Upper Seas.

Would that the Mighty Admiral could behold you,
Flying o'er Genoa—far, free and fair—
Your new-found way. Not e'en his dreams foretold you—
Explorers of the Ocean of the Air.

In Europe, with crusaders' faith undying,
You weave the nations closer day by day.
Earth's Motherland hath marked your shuttles flying,
From Iran old to Nippon and Cathay.

Sahara's sands; the land of Cleopatra;
The Giant Isle round which the South Main sings;

The East, from Babylon to far Sumatra,
Have seen, heard, marveled at your flashing wings.

*

Fast in the Western World the web is growing
As on their courses gallant airmen fly
Bearing hopes, plans and dreams beyond all knowing
In safety through the highways of the sky.

And, as exchange of thought grows faster, clearer,
Intolerance and hatred die away;
The Glory of the Vision draweth nearer,
When love and knowledge bring the Perfect Day.

Dream-Weavers, working out a mighty mission,
Are those who fly the planes o'er sea and land.
They speed the coming of the time elysian
When all, in comrade love, will understand

And clearly see that, by nor man nor nation
Can real happiness or wealth be won
Till Social Justice brings emancipation
From every tyranny beneath the sun.

*

Speed on, brave Heralds, o'er the airways winging—
Shuttles of Destiny across the skies!
Within our hearts you keep the joybells ringing . . .
Weavers of Dreams in fair, divine emprise.

COURIERS OF LIFE

"Upon the wings of the wind"

BROAD-WINGÈD Couriers of Life! . . .
Beneficent their ways;
Noble their work—too little known;
Well have they earned the bays.

Unto the tender, growing fields
Right timely aid they bring;
In shipwreck, pestilence and fire
Men bless their flashing wing.

In earthquake, flood, on icebound ship,
Marooned in desert sands,
Caught by the gales on mountain heights,
Or lost in lonely lands,

The blessèd Couriers of Life—
Instant in time of need—
With food and clothes and all good cheer
Have flown with lightning speed.

O'er the vast forests of the land
The faithful scouts on high,

Alert for the devouring flames,
  Patrol with eagle eye.

Industrial and city plans,
  Problems of rail and sail . . .
The keen-eyed soaring camera
  Helps solve them without fail.

Alaska's mountain ranges high
  And virgin forests vast
Their secrets to the mapping men
  Have yielded up at last.

Rivers and lakes and waterfalls . . .
  Illimitable power—
Recorded, clear and mirror-true,
  Seven hundred miles an hour.

Topographers and engineers,
  Seeking the hidden springs
To learn the water's secret source,
  Call on the mighty wings

To bear them over beetling cliff
  And canyon deep and lone.
Ice-armored peak and sagebrush grey
  Have heard the airplane's drone.

From photos, maps and plans are drawn;
The waters mid the hills
Are garnered till, long leagues away,
Ten thousand thousand rills

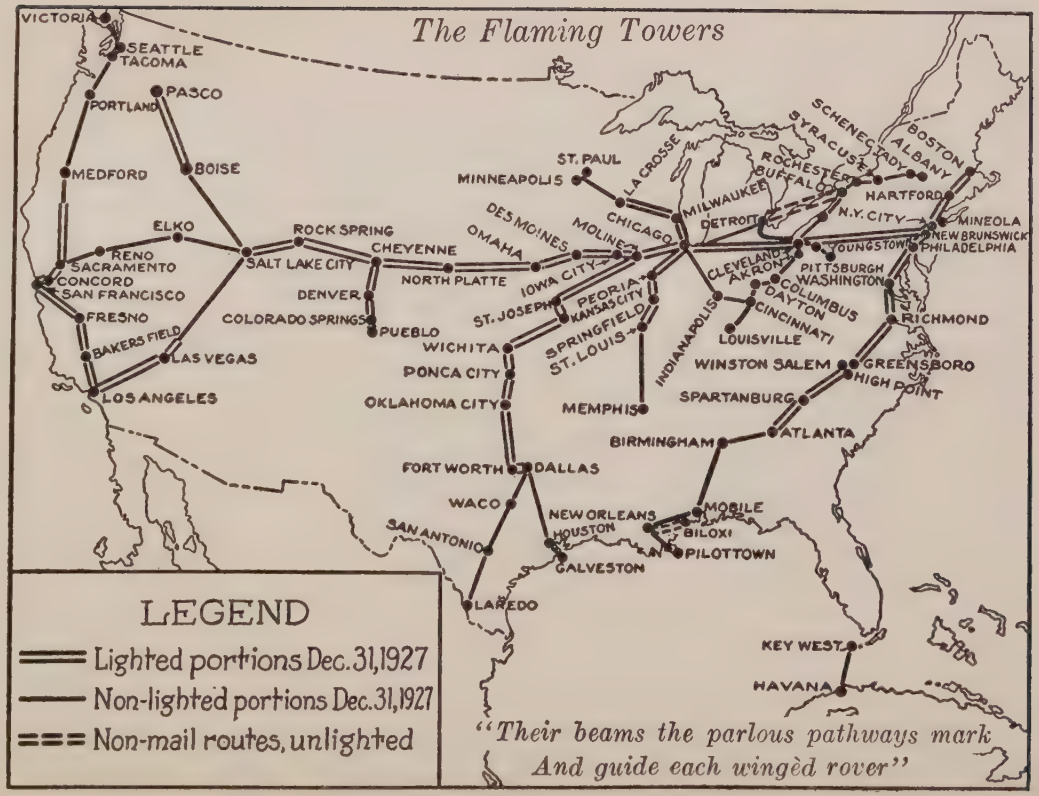
Trickle across broad smiling fields.
The mountain snows and rains
Bring harvests where, but yesteryear,
Lay scorched and barren plains.

*

Brave Soldiers of the Common Good!—
Few flowers to them are flung;
Unknown and unacclaimed are they,
And all-but all unsung.

So let one harp at least be struck
To sing their labors fair . . .
They make life richer for us all,
These heroes of the air.

THE FLAMING TOWERS


The Flaming Towers
VICTORIA
SEATTLE
TACOMA
PASCO
PORTLAND
MEDFORD
BOISE
ELKO
RENO
SACRAMENTO
CONCORD
SAN FRANCISCO
FRESNO
BAKERS FIELD
LAS VEGAS
LOS ANGELES
SALT LAKE CITY
ROCK SPRING
CHEYENNE
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LOUISVILLE
RICHMOND
WINSTON SALEM
GREENSBORO
HIGH POINT
SPARTANBURG
ATLANTA
BIRMINGHAM
MOBILE
BILOXI
PILOTTOWN
KEY WEST
HAVANA
LEGEND
Lighted portions Dec. 31, 1927
Non-lighted portions Dec. 31, 1927
Non-mail routes, unlighted
"Their beams the parlous pathways mark
And guide each wingèd rover"

THE FLAMING TOWERS

A Song of the Coastwise Lights

THE Coastwise Lights beside the sea
Have oft been written fair.
Now other Coastwise Lights there be—
The Beacons of the Air.
Their beams the parlous pathways mark
And guide each wingèd rover
As through the all-enshrouding dark
He speeds the highways over.

The Seacoast Lights beside the wave
Give warning: "Keep away!"
The Aircoast Lights greet fliers brave
With gladsome, homelike ray
That tells of help and all good will
On desperate occasion
When Powers of Darkness, Storm and Ill
Resent their realm's invasion.

The flashing and revolving lights—
Millions of candle-power—
Beacon the Airways' dizzy heights
From many a Flaming Tower

The doughty mariners to hail
Who, on their roaring pinions,
Brave fog and gale and snow to sail
The Air-King's dread dominions.

And, true as is the homing dove,
Or never-failing sun,
Their courses in the sea above
They, ever-faithful, run.
From North to South, from East to West,
Their gallant way they're winging;
O'er river, plain and mountain-crest
Their airy song they're singing

Of youth, clean manhood, high emprise,
Clear heads, stout hearts and true
That brave the perils of the skies
For me—and you—and you.
God speed each faithful flying knight,
And keep him safe from all despite;
And guard each blessèd Beacon bright
That, through the darksome hours
Be-stars the Airways—(gladsome sight!)
With clear assurance: "All is right!
"We'll guide you safe till morning light!" . . .
The Aircoast Flaming Towers.

THE IDLER

Bill Jay, whose most fatiguing work
Through all his married life
Had been delivering the wash
Made snowy by his wife,
Heard news one day from old Tom Hick
Up at the corner store,
Which made him gasp with righteous rage
As ardently he swore.

"By Heck!" shouts Bill, "a tarnal shame!
Tom Hick he heard somewhere
About the pay them pilots gits
For flyin' through the air
With the Air Mail. It's jest a crime
Tom sez, an' I agree.
Them rascals up in Washington
They're most almighty free

"Spendin' the taxes that we pays
With grindin' toil and sweat.
I'm goanta start a protest up!
I'll not stand this, you bet! . . .
Thirty-eight hundred plunks a year,
And bonus 'top o' that
F'r every mile—and more pay nights!
It's robbery! That's flat!

"I seen one onct aflyin' past;
And them that claims *that* biz
Earns all that pile o' money—shucks!
They dunno wot *work* is!
The plane wuz sailin' right along—
The engine put it through;
The feller settin' in the seat
He had no work to do!"

"Right, Uncle Bill! I'll tell the world!"
Said Brown, with twinkling eye.
"When East last year I rode a plane
Clear from New York to Chi.
It surely was an easy job,
And such enormous pay
From out your taxes—'Tis a shame!
Good money thrown away!

"All that that pilot had to do
Was sit right in his seat
And see the earth glide swiftly past
Far underneath his feet.
These things, of course, he had to watch:
Drift set, inductor true,
Tachometer, oil pressure gauge
And air speed meter, too;

"His inclinometer, besides,
On that he kept an eye;
And turn- and altimeters both
Are needed in the sky;
Gas gauge, gas pressure, beacon lights,
Fog, sand-storms, sleet and snow
Have to be watched—but no real *work* . . .
That for a fact I *know*.

"Then, if your engine goes haywire
In peasoup day or night,
Jump over with a parachute
And pick a place to light.
The sky's the limit in that game;
There's no real ground for kickin'.
With all the rolling earth to choose
There's lots of room for pickin'.

"I sure agree with you and Tom—
Those chaps are overpaid.
I'll sign a protest any time,
Or join in a parade
To stop this dreadful waste of coin
From us hard workers bled.
Let's call a meeting at . . ." but lo!
The valiant Bill had fled.

THE HEARTY GODSPEED

An Air Chantey

THE navy folk they are sure the best
(Heigh-ho, my lads, heigh-ho!)
For a warm godspeed to a parting guest;
(Heigh-ho, my lads, heigh-ho!)
They balance you on two bits of rail
With a charge of powder under your tail . . .
Bang!—and into the air you sail!
(Heigh-ho, my lads, heigh-ho!)
Yes, Bing, Bang, Biff! and away you sail!
(Heigh-ho, my lads, heigh-ho!)

On land you must work your way before
(Heigh-ho, my lads, heigh-ho!)
You take to the air and away you soar;
(Heigh-ho, my lads, heigh-ho!)
But when you're at sea you sit in state; . . .
Just start your engine and simply wait
Till the charge goes off—*then* absquatulate!
(Heigh-ho, my lads, heigh-ho!)
Oh boy! *I'll* say you absquatulate!
(Heigh-ho, my lads, heigh-ho!)

The charge goes off and so do you
(Heigh-ho, my lads, heigh-ho!)
At a zippy pace o'er the ocean blue,
(Heigh-ho, my lads, heigh-ho!)
In the navy's good old hearty way. . . .
"*High*-ho!" is right, as you'll surely say
If you try the stunt yourself some day;
(Heigh-ho, my lads, heigh-ho!)
That's how *you'll* feel when *you're*
launched some day—
(High-ho, my lads, high-ho!)

Oh a life on the deep is the life for me,
(Heigh-ho, my lads, heigh-ho!)
With the navy hospitalitee!
(Heigh-ho, my lads, heigh-ho!)
Three cheers for a life on a fast seaplane,
With its warm godspeed o'er the foaming main—
And the next time out you'll get it again.
(Heigh-ho, my lads, heigh-ho!)
The same Hot Time when you leave again.
(Heigh-ho, my lads, heigh-ho!)

CHOOSERS OF THE SLAIN

A Song of the Flying Death

GREAT War-Swallows, quickly swooping
As they wage their wingèd battle . . .
Swift away . . . a moment looping . . .
Then the sharp staccato rattle.

Upward soaring; ever striving;
For a point of vantage seeking;
Then like lightning downward diving
Till again the guns start speaking.

Dipping . . . slipping . . . firing . . . lunging . . .
Till the breathless watchers gazing
Mark the awful downward plunging
Of War's living meteors blazing.

From the tumult and the crashing
Zigzags out a fleeing swallow. . . .
Quick as thought a foe out-flashing,
In pursuit begins to follow

Sure and certain . . . death unswerving . . .
Chooser of the Slain untiring . . .

Gliding . . . sliding . . . swift down-curving . . .
  Till . . . again the deadly firing.

See! The fleeing bird is turning! . . .
  At his foeman straight he's dashing! . . .
Ah! His plane has started burning! . . .
  God!—The two together crashing!

Doomed to death! . . . so, instant swinging,
  He a living missile aiming—
By his final stroke down-bringing
  With himself, his killer, flaming.

. . .

Far aloft a plane is riding . . .
  Through the airy ripples slipping . . .
Stilled the hands so apt in guiding;
  Careless how the prow goes dipping.

O'er the Death-enchanted highways
  Dead, the pilot still is flitting,
While, afar on dizzy byways
  Miles away, the guns are spitting.

. . .

Scouters, swiftly flying over . . .
  Hawk-eyed watchers, never ceasing;
Bombers, as mile-high they hover,
  Latent thunderbolts releasing.

*

Last, the War-birds homeward flying
From the scenes of death and sorrow,
Mid the wreckage leave the dying . . .
Pray for "Better luck tomorrow."

THE ROUND OF HONOR

But yesterday two fliers flashed and whirled,
Fighting a duel in the central sky.
By the Valkyrior one down was hurled
With broken wing . . . to drop . . . and
crash . . . and die.

Today comes he who wears the victor's crown
And, soaring eagle-high, far far below
Casts blossoms, on the earth to flutter down—
A soldier's tribute to a gallant foe.

SOUNDING THE AIRY SEA

A Song of the "Icicle Crown"

Up . . . till the air grows thin and weak;
Till the reeling plane-wings lurch.
A league beyond Himalaya's peak
They've pressed their awesome search.

What do they see from their lookout there
In the blue above our heads—
Those Deep Sea Men of the Upper Air . . .
The human dipsy leads?

ABOVE the zone of calmness which belts the central sky,
From warmly near and friendly earth to icy stratosphere
Where, though mid deadly coldness the daring riders fly,
Yet violet rays burn fiercely through frigid air and clear;

Where bright th'Aurora flashes, far in the cloudless deep,
Its brilliant, blazing beacons athwart the blue sublime;
And through which boundless regions the fliers upward sweep
Till "Thus far and no farther" marks the ceiling of their climb,

The dust is that of meteors; the silence, as of the tomb;
A league below is left behind the highest-flying bird.

Alone in space the airship swings—beneath it, crashing doom.
Save motor's roar or lab'ring lungs no sound of life is heard.

The far-off world of Lilliput is glimpsed through random rifts
In misty draperies which spread two dizzy leagues below
Where gales, in whirling madness, pile clouds in low'ring drifts
Or deck the pigmy landscape with jewels of the snow.

*

To chart the trackless ocean o'er which the Space Gods reign
These navigators brave the Fates and pledge their lives in fee;
So let us folk of Lilliput who close to shore remain
Do honor to the knightly souls who, for the common gain,
Soar Upward Ho! with Death beside—to pay the price full fain . . .
The Heroes of the Stratosphere, who sound the Airy Sea.

A SNAPPY COMEBACK

WHEN Lindy made his wonder-flight,
Young Jack was like the rest of us;
He talked of him both day and night
As did the worst and best of us.

'Twas Lindy pictures, Lindy ties;
Dear Lindy filled the heart of him;
And Lindy's flight across the skies
Became the greater part of him.

On Lindy's wings his weeks flew by;
'Twas Lindy everywhere with him
Till Mother said, with twinkling eye,
That other thoughts should share with him.

"Aw!" cried young Jack, "I bet that you
Was jist as much hystericky
In Fourteen Hundred Ninety-Two
When Clumbus found Americky!"

PUTTING IT THROUGH

"When the Gods of Storm are fighting"—

PUTTING IT THROUGH

[*As night came on, the blizzard raged more furiously. The snow, already deep, drifted badly. All railroad service was suspended. Ice, wet snow and sleet broke the wires and put power and light plants out of commission. Only the air mail planes came through.—Daily papers of any winter since 1918.*]

WHEN the Gods of Storm are fighting and the bitter blasts are biting
And the Glass is knocked by Zero for a goal;
When the snow and sleet are making all the wires start abreaking
And you can't keep warm to save your shiv'ring sou!;
When each light- and power-station is a useless aggravation
And the railroad service isn't worth a sou,
Cheer up! You can still get action!—for propellers still get traction! . . .
And the airplanes with the mail come singing through.

For, though blizzards fast are blizzing, faster still the wheel keeps whizzing
Through the snow that rasps, with bitter sting behind;
And though Boreas keeps roaring, through the storm the plane keeps boring,

☆ ☆

Fighting side-drift as the tempest drives her blind.
Seeking for some guide or other through the icy, fleecy smother, . . .
Straining every sense to keep her headed true
With no vestige of a beacon! . . . there's no room for those who weaken
On the planes which, with the mail, come proudly through.

He must see when there's *no* seeing, every fiber of his being
Thrilling surely to a sixth—yes, seventh sense
As he darts along the airway seeking for the friendly fairway,
While the bitter cold grows ever more intense.
He must guide himself by feeling, for there isn't any ceiling,
And he's IT!—he's *solo!* . . . Captain, Cook and Crew!
He's a comet in descension hurtling through the Fourth Dimension!
He's an Air Mail Pilot bound to put it through!

*

Yesteryear Haroun-al-Raschid on his wingèd coursers dashèd
From Bagdad . . . W h i z z! . . . whene'er he waved his hand;

☆ ☆

And his genii so husky, plus his djinns and giants dusky,
They were Warm Bambinos in that sunny land.
But I'll bet a large round dollar djinns and genii would holler
And resign—in toto! . . . pronto! . . . P. D. Q.!—
If one said: "Here lads. Start roaming through a blizzard in Wyoming.
"Take this load of airplane mail and put it through!"

OUR BRIGHT IDEA

If there breathes on earth a guy, be his station low or high,
Who doesn't savvy true democracee,
Let him read this jingle cheerful and he'll get a lavish earful
Of our methods in this country of the free.

First, of course, you surely know, since we started long ago,
Our motto is: "Give Equal Rights to All.
We'll have no class legislation in the confines of our nation.
If we start *that,* we'll be riding for a fall."

So, our method here has been, when a tough job we begin,
(Like the Air Mail—just to cite a Q. E. D.)
It's put through by all the nation. No one gink nor corporation
Could be equal to the job, we all agree.

So we spend a wad of dough and we make the business go;
And when it starts to bringing in the jack

Over and above expenses, quick we come back to our
senses
And yell: "All true Americans, get back

"To the wisdom of the sages as it thunders down the ages;
To the Equal Rights American Idee
In which we have faith implicit: Only if success should
miss it,
Should *all* the people handle business. See?

" 'Tis a governmental stunt while the big financial brunt
Is borne by taxes *all* the people pay;
But when profits come, By Gee! any but a nut can see
That private folk must grab it right away.

"There's no other moral way. It would bust the U. S. A.
If the government would run a thing that paid.
While it's risky exploration sending mail by aviation
On the General Taxes let the load be laid;

"But 'twould be a horrid scheme—wicked to the last ex-
treme—
When the profit point is reached, as all can see,
Not to give it to Big Business—that's the Howcome of the
Isness
Why this land is called the Country of the Free."

Free to get a business humming; a success—right up and coming;
Build it with the people's money till it's grown.
Then what's paid for by the nation handed to a corporation—
Private hands to reap what all of us have sown.

Plain as one and one make two, you can see it wouldn't do
To make charges lower, . . . let the people share
In the profits. Goodness gracious! Help! That's treason most audacious!
Beat it! Clip your bolsheviskers and your hair!

Try and grasp our Bright Idee!—in our country 'tis of thee
Here's the logic by the which we shape and plan:
Soon's a business pays a profit, let the government lay off it.
If it runs it *then,* 'tis un-Amer*ican.*

THE PILOTS

A Song of the Inner Sea

Now for a Song of the Inner Sea
That stretches the stars among—
And a more entrancing mystery
Has never been told nor sung; . . .
The Sea whose throbbing, vibrant waves
(As in a magic dream),
While through the dark the tempest raves,
Bear guiding Voice and Gleam.

Through this wondrous Sea within a Sea
Around the rolling earth
Throb tidings of human destiny,
Music and song and mirth.
The Outer Sea, which the flier braves,
Is the ocean of the sky;
And the Inner Sea is the ether waves
Through which the signals fly.

The Outer Sea is troubled sore
When the Storm-Gods leave their lair;

But the Inner Sea heeds nevermore
The gales of the Sea of Air;
And, as the Riders of the Sky
Their roaring roads pursue,
Their course will soon be guided by
Unsleeping Pilots true.

Of knowledge of the Inner Sea
But part is the scroll unfurled,
Yet soon the Airy Ways will be
Ruled through that finer world.
The throbbing signals and the lights,
Through sand-storms, fog and snow
Will guide the Airmen in their flights
As arrow-swift they go.

The mentor-signal either hand,
The lights that wax and wane,
The friendly speech from hidden land—
These will the course make plain.
While speeds the storm-wrapped flying bark
O'er land or sea its way,
The Pilots, through the cloaking dark,
With signal, speech and ray,

From port to port will guide it true
As though the skies were fair;

Foiling that grim, hard-bitten crew—
The Powers of the Air.

. .

On the great highways of the sky
These marvels yet will be,
Wrought by the wondrous waves that fly
Throughout the Inner Sea.

" . . . AND THERE WAS LIGHT"

A Harbor Song

From fifteen hundred feet in air
The droning hum is heard.
The plane in darkness circles there—
An eager, homing bird.

Its voice, as in Creation's morn,
Cleaving the inky night,
Reveals the earth from darkness born
By its: "Let There Be Light."

WESTWARD HO!

The Rune of the Homing Songs

HIP HURRAH! Safe in our places
We are headed for the West;
For the far-flung open spaces
And the One we love the best.
With a roar of rushing pinions
O'er the Torch of Liberty,
Through Aeolus' vast dominions
Toward the far Pacific Sea
We are flying . . . flying . . . flying
Over city, lake and river;
Where the morning rays are lying
Or the liquid moonbeams quiver,
To the sunset's golden gateway.
We are yearning to be there,
And are speeding thither straightway
Through the ocean of the air.

To the One we love the best
We are soaring . . . soaring . . . soaring;
To our Darling in the West,
Through the airways ceaseless roaring.

We are soaring . . . soaring . . . soaring . . .
And our joy in song outpouring;
We are soaring . . . soaring . . . soaring
To our own Songmother's breast.

O'er the mines and o'er the railways
Loud our mighty pinions hum.
Few there be who know our trailways—
Mark us go or see us come.
O'er the land with hamlets spotted
Speed we on our headlong way;
O'er the lakes with shipping dotted,
Through the night as through the day
We are winging . . . winging . . . winging
Over forest land and prairie;
Mid the clouds our song we're singing
As we thread our pathway airy.
Though the deluge tries to drown us
As the tempest sweeps the sky,
Or the gales attempt to down us—
All their efforts we defy.

To the One we love the best
We are fleeting . . . fleeting . . . fleeting;
To our Darling in the West,
Who will give us gladsome greeting.

We are fleeting . . . fleeting . . . fleeting
To that joyous hour of meeting;
We are fleeting . . . fleeting . . . fleeting
To our own Songmother's breast.

Through the night's soul-trying watches,
As we throb upon our way,
City lights in gleaming splotches
Dot our path in due array;
Or, if deadly black fog blind us,
Then by luck and log we steer—
Fleecy death before, behind us,
But within our hearts no fear.
We are racing . . . racing . . . racing . . .
Ever steadily advancing;
Ever to the westward facing;
Speeding to our goal entrancing.
O'er the Father of the Waters,
Unvexed rolling to the sea,
To our Love among the daughters
We are flying fast and free.

To the One we love the best
We are coming . . . coming . . . coming;
To our Darling in the West—
(Listen to our great wings humming!)

We are coming . . . coming . . . coming . . .
(Hark, our droning pinions humming!)
We are coming . . . coming . . . coming
To our own Songmother's breast.

☆ ☆

O'er the farmlands, foothills, mountains,
Through the foul as through the fair,
Where the streams in snowy fountains
Dash their waters high in air,
Through the lonely snowbound passes
And the blizzard's icy breath,
Past the towering granite masses
Which, to touch, were instant death,
We are fleeting . . . fleeting . . . fleeting . . .
Not one instant's pause nor staying
Of our pinions' rhythmic beating,
For we brook of no delaying.
Daring death and all disaster,
Now we reach the Great Divide
Guided by our pilot-master . . .
O v e r !— Down the other side!

To the One we love the best
We are flying . . . flying . . . flying;
To our Darling in the West—
Her for whom our hearts were sighing.

We are flying . . . flying . . . flying
With delight and joy undying;
We are flying . . . flying . . . flying
To our own Songmother's breast.

☆ ☆

Mountains awesome, deserts dreary
Of the savage, vast plateau,
Lakes and rivers, ranches cheery
Glide behind us as we go.
Fast the sagebrush is departing
Where the trickling rills are seen
As on high we're westward darting
To the Land of Living Green.
We are rushing . . . rushing . . . rushing
O'er the shining silver starways;
And when dawn the East is flushing
Still we flash along the far ways
On the rosy wings of morning—
True as Needle to the Pole—
Every hindrance lightly scorning
That would stay us from our goal.

To the One we love the best
We are speeding . . . speeding . . . speeding;
To our Darling in the West—
Of aught else we are unheeding.

We are speeding . . . speeding . . . speeding
O'er the skyways homeward leading;
We are speeding . . . speeding . . . speeding
To our own Songmother's breast.

Naught there is that can defeat us.
Fast o'er forest lands we soar.
Well we know dear Love will greet us
On the fair Pacific shore.
Soon—our Homing Flight all ended—
We shall rest where we would be;
Live in joy the Vision Splendid
With our Darling by the Sea.
We are flashing . . . flashing . . . flashing . . .
Every moment drawing nearer
Where the western waves are dashing
And the skies are bluer, clearer;
Where the Outland Folk can never
Know how each enraptured heart
Will be throbbing as forever
They will meet, no more to part.

To the One we love the best
We are gleaming . . . gleaming . . . gleaming;
As we flash adown the West
Through our plumes the gales are streaming.

From the Islands of the Blest
We are gleaming . . . gleaming . . . gleaming;
For our Darling in the West
We are bringing true her dreaming.

We are gleaming . . . gleaming . . . gleaming
Where the sunset rays are beaming;
We are gleaming . . . gleaming . . . gleaming
To our own Songmother's breast.

THE SAGA OF THE WILD SWAN

"LINDBERGH FLIES ALONE"

ALONE?

Is he alone at whose right side rides Courage, with Skill within the cockpit and Faith upon the left? Does solitude surround the brave when Adventure leads the way and Ambition reads the dials? Is there no company with him for whom the air is cleft by Daring and the darkness is made light by Emprise?

True, the fragile bodies of his fellows do not weigh down his plane; true, the fretful minds of weaker men are lacking from his crowded cabin; but as his airship keeps her course he holds communion with those rarer spirits that inspire to intrepidity and by their sustaining potency give strength to arm, resource to mind, content to soul.

Alone? With what other companions would that man fly to whom the choice were given?

Editorial in "The Sun," New York,
May 21, 1927. Reprinted by
Permission

"King of all fliers . . .
Swift, sure and certain
Swept on its journey"

THE SAGA OF THE WILD SWAN

A Song of the King-man

SWIFT rose the Wild Swan,
Lindbergh the Northman,
On shining pinions
Cleaving the ether.

Far, far below him
Down sank the city.
Towers and spires—
Like children's playthings
Seen for a moment
Through a car window—
Suddenly were not.

As a vast picture
In living colors
Lay the great coastline
Spread out beneath him.

On sped the Wild Swan
Northward and eastward,
Swiftly and strongly
Flying o'er Vinland,

Where Leif, the Norseman,
Son of Red Erik
(Leif, called the Lucky)
Sailing from Iceland,
Came with his galleys.

Fast sped the Wild Swan
Crossing Acadia;
Flashed the bright flier
Over Newfoundland;
Then, like an arrow
Fresh from the bowstring,
O'er the dread ocean
Straight to the eastward
Roared the great pinions.

Far from alone he:
"Skill in the cockpit,
"Courage at right hand,
"Faith at the left hand,"
Youth in his stout heart,
Vision to beckon, . . .
With rare companions
Sped the Swan eastward.

From his brave father
Daring of Northmen;

From his true mother
Valor of heroes;
In his heart throbbing
Blood of Cuchulain—
Noble Cuchulain,
Champion of Erin;
In his blood pulsing
Courage of Roland—
Roland, the hero
Of Roncevalles;
Valiant within him
Spirit of Arthur—
Arthur of Britain,
True knight and king-man.

Sped the Swan eastward,
King of all fliers.
Strong, sure its heartbeats
Throbbed in its bosom.
Ever its pinions,
Roaring and shining,
Through the air cleaving
O'er lost Atlantis,
Swift, sure and certain
Swept on its journey
While the world-peoples
(Breathless and eager,

Hoping and praying)
Waited for tidings.

Then came the Storm-Gods,
Children of Ymir,
With sleet and tempest
Planned his destruction;
O'er miles a thousand
Strove to destroy him;
With mist and fogbanks
Sought to betray him.

Boldly defying
All their endeavors,
Strongly the Wild Swan—
Silver-winged flier,
Champion of Champions,
Blest of the Nornir—
Conquered the tempests,
Breasted the sleet storms,
Cleft through the fogbanks
Blinding and deadly
Sent by the Dark Ones,
Children of Ymir—
Hating the Bright One,
Seeking to slay him.

Calmly defiant,
Led by the Needle,—
Pointing him safely,
Guiding him surely—
Winging the skyways
Over the ocean,
On its great pinions
Flashed the Swan eastward,
Fearless and tireless,
Through the long hours
Till fell the darkness.

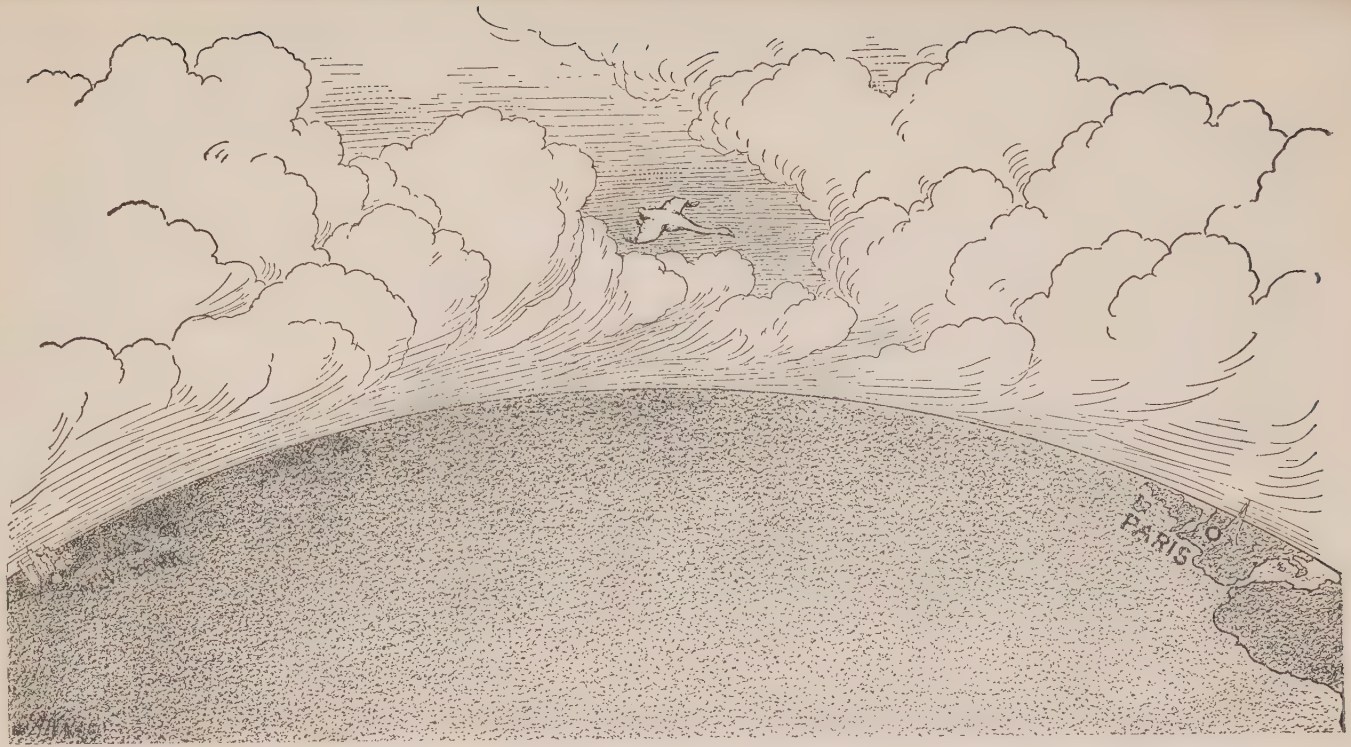
. . .

Through the night watches
Onward! Still onward
Whirred the great pinions;
Onward, unresting, . . .
On to the eastward,
Meeting the sunrise; . . .
Eastward, still eastward—
Living his vision.

Through the new dawning
Eastward and eastward
Flashed the bright pinions
Steadily beating.
Through the wide spaces

Roared the air-rover;
Like silver meteor
Sped the star-viking
O'er the sky dreamways; . . .
Higher than Bifrost—
Bifrost the rainbow
Bridging the chasm
Leading to Asgard—
Asgard the Happy,
Home of the High Gods;
Asgard the Golden
Where reigneth Odin.

Onward and onward,
Ceaseless and tireless; . . .
As a swift torrent
Leagues swept behind him.
O'er the Enchanted
Isles of the Blessèd
In the deep bosom
Of the Atlantic
On flashed the Wild Swan,
Ever to eastward,
Till beauteous Erin,
Home of Cuchulain,
Gladdened his vision
O'er the horizon.



"Fast sped the Wild Swan, Lindbergh the Northman . . . Lone-flight Columbus, Admiral of Airways"

Swift over Erin;
Then the bright sea-lane;
Next over Albion
Straight as an arrow,
Onward and onward,
Ceaseless and tireless;
Over the Channel,
Dotted with shipping;
Over the mainland
Eager to greet him,
Till in the ancient
City of Hugo—
City of Victor,
Crowned with the laurel—
This newest victor,
Famous forever,
Folded his pinions,
To the earth glided,
Calm, yet exultant,
Stepped from the cockpit
Smiling and happy—
Lone-flight Columbus,
Admiral of Airways.

*

Thrilled all the ether
To the Glad Tidings
O'er the world flashing:

"Wild Swan has landed!"
Earth, Sea and Skyways
Throbbed with his praises,
Bowed to the king-man,
Worshipped his courage—
Able and strong man,
Dreaming so truly;
Dreaming and working;
Living his Vision.
Winning their dear love
With his clean boy's heart;
Winning allegiance
By his strong manhood,
By divine kingship, . . .
Truly a king-man.

*

Such is the Saga
How the New Viking
Sped o'er Atlantis
Linking the peoples,
Bearing the message
Brought by the White Christ:
"Let us be comrades;
"Live as one family;
"Turn from the old ways,
"Hating and fighting;
"Follow the White Christ,
"Live all as brothers.

"May peaceful airways
"Knit all the nations
"In bonds of friendship
"Not to be broken.
"As the bright wings flash
"May they but hasten
"Dawn of the New Time
"When, the world over,
"Peace, Truth and Justice
"Bless all the peoples."

Such is his message, . . .
Spoken, unspoken.
Such is his longing,
Purpose, ideal.
Such is his Vision,
Soul-Vision splendid
In his heart cherished.
Whoso hath Vision
Straight can perceive it.

Son of such father,
Son of such mother
Is by Divine Right
Born a true king-man,
Able-man, Chieftain,
Strong man and leader;
Seer *and* Worker,

Dreamer *and* Doer, . . .
Hearing the White Bird's
Runes in the dawning;
Keeping the music
In his heart ever;
Chording his life's work
To the Bird's singing.

Pelions golden
Piled upon Ossas
From his ears cannot
Shut out the music;
From the heart's dreamways
Cannot mislead him;
From the soul's Vision
Cannot allure him.
Well such heart knoweth
True work and manhood
Are the sole riches
Worthy of prizing;
Are the Pearls Priceless—
Treasure supernal.

* * *

Ends now the Saga . . .
Flight of the Wild Swan;
Of the Star-Viking,
Lindbergh the Northman;

Hailing as comrades
Folk in the Outlands;
Greeting as brothers
Far-distant peoples—
Lindbergh the Northman,
Blest of the Nornir, . . .
Dreamer and Doer,
Chieftain and King-man.

THE DREAM COME TRUE

He was a verray parfit gentil knight.—CHAUCER.

THE cry, "He comes!"—and scores of thousands pour
From shop and office, mill and factory.
With hearts aflood they watch, the city o'er,
The circling, silvern flight of world-crowned "We."
Why does mankind such boundless homage pay;
All pulses quicken when his name is heard;
All trace his wingèd path from day to day
And listen breathless to his slightest word?

In this young viking of the starry sea
Each man, as through the blue the flier gleams,
Visions such knight as once he longed to be;
Each woman, son or lover of her dreams—
Brave, modest, strong to do as wise to plan;
Seeking his Grail; poised from within . . . a Man.

OVERCOME HEROES

Have you heard that it was good to gain the day?
I also say it is good to fall. Battles are lost in the same spirit in which they are won.

. . . .

Vivas to those who have failed!
And to those whose . . . vessels sank in the sea!
And to those themselves who sank in the sea!
. . . and all overcome heroes!
And the numberless unknown heroes, equal to the greatest heroes known!

—*Walt Whitman:*
From "Song of Myself."

DEEP-DELVING is the craftsman's thought;
Right cunning are his clever hands;
His mind hath many wonders wrought
Beneath the skies of many lands.
Yet search those marvels treble-tale
Through all the world from Pole to Pole . . .
Not one among them all can scale
The Power that drives a human soul.

What needle on the speaking arc,
What subtle art of chemistry

Can indicate the mystic spark
Which, over earth and sky and sea,
Drives gallant souls to dare and do?
Against Fate's fearful odds to run? . . .
Let whoso will declare it true
All ends at set of earthly sun.

Did Brooke's eclipse ere waned the morn
Or Seeger's rendezvous with Death
Mean that the world, of them forlorn
And widowed by their passing breath,
Had lost the beauty of their lives,
Their high resolve and purpose strong?
Nay! The bright soul of them survives
Forever in their deathless song.

So with all brave by Death struck low
In earth or sea or boundless sky.
E'en while we weep, full well we know
That never can their spirits die.
Failures, the thoughtless throng may deem;
Yet he is hero none the less
Who follows whatsoe'er his Gleam
With constant singleheartedness.

The Secret Source whence Virtue springs
No earthly science yet hath traced.

Its mystic sway, while cosmos swings,
  Can never, never be effaced.
Truth, Courage, Faith . . . our debt to them
  Nor glass nor gauges e'er have scaled;
So let us chant as requiem:
  "Vivas to Heroes Who Have Failed!"

THROUGH THE GATES OF TOMORROW

A Song of the Southern Cross

FROM dream to deed, and from that deed again
To further dream and deed more mighty yet!
Marvel on marvel in these deedful days,—
Till now the dauntless Vikings of the Stars,
With wonder-wings upbearing valiant hearts,
And skilful heads and hands directing all,
The men of South and North have winged their way
From summer unto winter, North to South—
Yea, West to East . . . through sunset into dawn.

From the Great Redwoods to the Balmy Isles,
Across the Burning Girdle of the earth,
Above the gleaming leagues of lonely sea,
Through day and night, through fog and tempests' rage,
(Their story throbbing through the mystic waves
For all the breathless, hoping world to hear,
The while they fight to win their race with Death),
Their mighty wings devouring time and space,
O'ertaking e'en the morrow in their flight, . . .
Spanning at last Balboa's great South Main—
Eight thousand hungry miles of ocean sea.

*

Fair symbol of the progress of the race.
Derided seers and dreamers of today,
Scorning the obstacles that strew their paths,
Cherish the shining vision in their hearts,
Keep ever striving to attain their goal—
The kingdom of their nearest, dearest dreams;
And, though full oft defeated, in the end
They fight their valiant way in triumph through.

Leaving Today—as did the Southern Cross—
They blaze the trail 'neath distant, stranger skies, . . .
Through Gates of Sunset find the Newer Morn,
Knit closer ties of human brotherhood,
Of understanding, sympathy and love,
Broaden the path for lives of nobler aim,
And win a fairer Morrow for mankind.

THE WORLD A-WING

"They shall mount up with wings as eagles"

RASH prophet he indeed would be who'd name a final goal.
Airship and plane have dared the main around the Northern Pole.
New World and Old sent fliers bold on those historic flights;
They've writ each name on the Roll of Fame among the Northern Lights.
The sea they've spanned from land to land, St. Johns to Erin green;
From Labrador to Lisbon and the Islands in between.
From Scotland to Manhattan has an airship crossed the main,
And then, for goodly measure, it has crossed it home again.
America to France they've flown; . . . yes, farther—Germany;
Around the world their pinions whirled, for all that world to see.
Yet other gallant fliers made a 14,000 trip

Encircling South America—a flight of fellowship.
First westbound plane to tell the tale and save her gallant crew,
From Ireland to Newfoundland the Bremen fought it through.
The lands of Spain and Italy have sent their fliers forth;
The Portuguese picked up the gage thrown by the hardy North.
All knightly won their golden wings and showed their pluck and skill
By flying the Atlantic to a landing in Brazil.
Soon will the Air Mail overseas, by Verde or the Canaries,
Rush roaring on to Rio, then away to Buenos Aires.
Through the great condor's kingdom, o'er Andes' lordly heights,
The new and strange usurpers dispute his highest flights.
They wake the nesting seabirds along Pacific shore;
The land where reigned the Incas has heard their pinions roar;
The realm of Montezuma again has seen them fly—
Fair children of the Sun-God, descending from the sky.
The hardy Vikings of the Stars regard no boundary line, . . .
The plains and forests know them well, far North of Forty-Nine;
Yet others through the Golden Gate have winged their westward way

Unto the sunny islands on the pathway to Cathay.
The people of the Rising Sun soar with the wonder-wings;
E'en in the Flowery Kingdom the droning motor sings.
All Europe, one huge aviary, with birdfolk in the sky; . . .
French, Germans and Italians have hung their records high;
And in the vast republic along the Arctic Sea,
Where floats the Crimson Banner, the wings hum constantly.
The airmen of the British Isles have proved their skill and grit.
In the front rank is Cobham—and he surely does his bit.
He'll taxi you to Paris, Rome, Oslo . . . anywhere . . .
Just so the town is on the earth, and that the folk breathe air.
Give him the room to launch his plane, plus six feet scant to fly in,
If he can't get you there and back, might just as well quit tryin'.
He'll breakfast you in Luxemburg; eat luncheon in Cremona;
Drink tea on Mount Vesuvius, and dine in Barcelona.
Then, if to sleep away from home you have the slightest dread,
He'll zip you back to London Town in lots of time for bed.

Here are some little flights he's made, to get a breath of air
And keep himself from mischief while he waited for a fare:
From London out to India and back he made a trip;
London to Capetown and return, without mishap or slip;
Then, farther than around the world—true as the arrow freed—
London-Australia and return . . . an epic flight indeed!
Others have traced the trail he blazed—Hinkler, in solo flight;
Bold Lancaster and Miller, too, have scribed their records bright . . .
The Red Rose of Old England they sped from strand to strand,
Linking in closer comrade-love mother- and daughter-land.
And, through Black-Swan- and Eagle-men—those Fate-defying four—
The Southern Cross will blaze with deathless splendor evermore.

*

These are just scattered high lights—deeds done and being done
By heroes of the joystick beneath the equal sun.
Where is the seer who, e'en one year, would forecast for the sky,

And try to say, save day by day, where next mankind will fly?
One thing is sure—while men endure, their wings will ne'er be furled.
All Hail the Brave!—the host that gave these wings to this our world.

PLAYING THE GAME

" . . . and sing the folk who fly"

PLAYING THE GAME

A Song of the Rank and File

AMONG a thousand million men
But few indeed there be
Who, wingèd by the Gods, can rise
And soar o'er land and sea.

From main to main—yes, farther still!—
Have sped these fliers bold.
Both east and west we've seen them join
The New World to the Old.

For most of us the common task
As grey days drag them by;
Yet, though the flesh be leaden-shod,
The spirit free can fly.

The skilful hand, the nerves of steel,
Trained eye and facile mind,
The youth and strength to guide the wings
That leave the gales behind . . .

These do we earthbound mortals lack—
Yet worst of shameful things

Should envy chill our love for those
The Gods have blessed with wings.

Not all can sail across the Pole
Beneath the icy sky;
Defy the leaping, hungry seas;
Above the eagle fly, . . .

But other service equally
May put our souls to test,
Calling for loyalty as strong
And courage of the best.

The parts we play upon Life's stage
Have been assigned by Fate;
And it is writ: "They also serve
"Who only stand and wait."

*

So, though on lowly Mother Earth
The Songsmith's years slip by,
His part he'll play as best he may
And sing the folk who fly.

NOTES

RIDERS OF THE SKY—To set down anything even faintly approaching adequacy regarding the heroism, the skill and the efficiency of the Air Mail Pilots would demand the technical and practical knowledge of a Wright and a Lindbergh, united to the genius of a Bernard Shaw. Many volumes could not begin to do them even a slight measure of justice. For the benefit of the casual reader, however, the eloquently significant fact is here set down that, in spite of the terrific weather conditions often encountered, 97 per cent of the Air Mail goes through safely and on time over the more than 9,000 miles of crosscountry airways.

THE FLAGSHIP—The original machine in which Orville Wright made the first flight—at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, in December, 1903—is still in existence, although partially dismantled. At the conclusion of the Kitty Hawk experiments, the famous "Flagship" was taken to Mr. Wright's workshop in Dayton, Ohio, where it remained until the early part of the present year (1928), when it was presented by Mr. Wright to the British Museum. For an exceedingly interesting and illuminating article on Mr. Wright and his epochal work see "The First Man to Fly", by Oscar Cesare, in the September (1927) number of "United States Air Services." (It appeared originally in the New York Times Sunday Magazine, July 17, 1927.)

COURIERS OF LIFE—Pages could be written on what is often given but a single word in this poem. Until one is led to look into the subject more closely than the average non-

flier is likely to do, one has no idea of the vast and vital role the airplane has come to play in the social life of this age. This poem is merely an attempt to pay a general tribute to the far-flung and manifold activities of the flying men in fields other than those of the air mail, army, navy and general commercial flying.

"Seven hundred miles an hour"—This means 700 square miles an hour. The mapping planes used in Alaska and otherwhere are equipped with automatic cameras which photograph a strip seven miles wide while the plane travels at the rate of 100 miles an hour. To offset this high speed and prevent blurring, a hypersensitive film is used (50% more sensitive to light than the ordinary.) In developing these super-sensitive films even the traditional red light can not be used. The photographer works in what is literally a dark room, guiding himself entirely by feeling.

THE HEARTY GODSPEED—One of the methods used in helping a plane to hop off from a ship at sea is to explode a charge of powder, utilizing the force of the explosion to speed the parting guest.

CHOOSERS OF THE SLAIN—See "The Air Man", by Francis A. Collins, chapter "Air Duels"; also other standard works on the use of the airplane in war.

THE ROUND OF HONOR—See note above, chapter "Chivalry of the Air."

SOUNDING THE AIRY SEA—This poem refers to what is known as "altitude flying." In May, 1927, Captain Hawthorne C. Gray (U. S. Army Air Corps) made a balloon

ascension from Scott Field, Ill. to a height of 42,470 feet (more than eight miles) above the earth for observation purposes. In November, 1927 (after this poem was written) he made another ascension which proved the final stanza to be tragically prophetic in his case—he being found dead in his balloon the following day at Sparta, Tenn. His oxygen tube was found severed, as if by a knife, so it is supposed that while ripping open sandbags, the knife cut the tube inadvertently, costing the gallant airman his life and inflicting a severe loss upon the air corps to which he belonged. Army balloonists agree that Captain Gray's ascents and records in sounding the airy sea have yielded information of lasting value to the science of aviation. Lieutenant J. A. Macready (U. S. Army Air Corps) has flown in an airplane to the height of 38,704 feet. At the time of writing these lines Lieut. Macready holds the world's "icicle crown"—the altitude record for airplane ascension.

"Stratosphere"—The layer of air extending from the earth up about 20,000 feet has been named the "troposphere." Above that, for a distance of several miles, is what is designated as the "stratosphere."

"Ceiling"—This word is used by flying folk with two differing meanings. It can signify that the flight has been to such a height that the air is too thin for the propeller of the plane to get traction, or for the balloon to rise any higher; but, in flying at average height, it means the distance between the earth and a fog. If there is a space of a thousand feet between the earth and the fog, the flier says he has a "ceiling" at a thousand feet. If the fog drops to the earth so that there is no visibility, it is said: "The ceiling lowers to zero." (See

"We", page 219 and Popular Science Monthly, September, 1927.)

PUTTING IT THROUGH—"There isn't any ceiling"—i. e. nothing can be seen. As an airman would word it, there is no visibility whatever. See also "ceiling" in notes to "Sounding the Airy Sea."

OUR BRIGHT IDEA—After spending about $15,000,000 during the past nine years in testing out and proving the feasibility of the Air Mail idea, the United States Government is going out of the Air Mail business. Air Mail transportation has been developed by government funds to the point where it is paying a profit. It has become "Big Business," therefore, in accordance with the traditional American Idea, the government will retire from its operation, turning over its equipment to private companies, with the exception of the system of air beacons and signals, which it will continue to maintain and operate and will extend as rapidly as possible, for the benefit of the private aviation companies.—Gist of many newspaper and magazine articles during the spring and summer of 1927.

THE PILOTS—Marvelous indeed is the progress in the development of radio. Among the latest at the time of writing is the application of radio to the guiding of airplanes in flight, the beaconing of the airways with audible and visible signals conveyed by radiotelegraphy and telephony.

Directional rays are sent out conveying signals in Morse code to mark the course of the flight and warn the flier of deviation therefrom. In a most interesting article in Lib-

erty for December 17, 1927, Lieutenant Lester J. Maitland, of the U. S. Army Air Corps, describes the Radio Beacon as follows:

"It is an electric current sent through the air at a set wave length and forms an airway along which the plane travels to its destination. This airway has three parallel zones—the T, N, and A zones. The T zone is the center of the road. It is about two miles broad at its maximum. While his ship stays in the center zone, the pilot gets the code letter T through his receiving set. If he veers to right, the T changes to an A; if he swings to left, the T gives way to N. All the pilot has to do when he hears N or A is to correct his course.

"There is no limit to the depth of the radio wave. It runs along the surface of the sea and rises high above the clouds. Whether a ship skims about 100 feet over the water or flies 10,000 feet above it, the pilot can hear its signal.

"The beacon also operates three lights in the instrument board. A white light shows when the ship is on its true course, a red when it has strayed to left, a green light when it has wandered too far to the right. . . .

"It is possible for those who direct the wave to deviate it toward any point of the compass. This is important because, with accurate meteorological data ashore, the wave can be swung to veer the pilot away from storms he may be heading into, but cannot see.

"Storms can be turned to advantage. The winds that surround them travel in well-defined circles. By going south of a storm, a pilot might find a forty-mile-an-hour tail wind, where, by going north of it, he would be bucking a forty-mile-an-hour head wind."

Lieutenant Maitland speaks particularly of long over-sea flights, but from the Radio Age, of September, 1927, we learn that radio beacons are to be established every two hundred miles along the routes of the overland airway system of the United States. At 25-mile intervals will be marker beacons, each one sending out a distinctive special signal on a designated wave-length, which will be caught by an instrument in the plane and constantly repeated as long as the plane is within its sending field. This will give the flier his location in blind weather.

By wireless telephone the pilot can talk to ground men at distances of a hundred miles or more, thus enabling him to obtain vital information as to weather and other conditions, to guide him in landing.

The instruments above mentioned have been installed by Mr. Haraden Pratt at the College Park, Maryland, air mail station, where the government does all its testing of aviation equipment.

" . . . AND THERE WAS LIGHT"—This poem refers to an instrument sensitive to sound, so adjusted as to be actuated by the hum of an airplane motor from a height of 1,500 feet above the landing field. The hum, amplified in strength, is applied to the closing of a switch, which turns on the current, thus flooding the landing field with light. (U. S. Air Services, Sept., 1927.)

WESTWARD HO!—That this poem may be fully understood, it is necessary to note here that "Westward Ho!" is sung by certain poems which were written in Tacoma, Washington, sent under cover by air mail to a friend in New York

City, and there re-mailed (air mail) for Aberdeen, Washington. It is probable that the delivery and re-mailing in New York caused a loss of more than 24 hours, yet the round trip record is worthy of preserving as denoting the high efficiency of the Air Mail Service, even at this early stage of its existence. The songs left Tacoma at 7.00 p. m. Thursday, August 11th, 1927; were re-mailed in New York City at 8.00 p. m. Sunday, August 14th and delivered in Aberdeen, Washington, at 2.00 p. m., Wednesday, August 17th, covering in that time approximately five thousand miles by air and six hundred miles by railroad. This poem was written while the songs were winging Westward Ho!, telegraphic advice having been received of their receipt and re-mailing in New York City.

"LINDBERGH FLIES ALONE"—Regarding this superb and moving classic, Mr. William T. Dewart, President of The Sun, says: "This editorial was written by Harold M. Anderson, who for 33 years has been a member of The Sun editorial staff. It was published on May 21 when all the world was speaking of the greatest of all American aviators as being alone on his crowning flight. A duplicate of the editorial, etched on solid silver, was presented to Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh on his arrival in New York."

THE SAGA OF THE WILD SWAN—"The Wild Swan": Lindbergh has been spoken of as "The Lone Eagle." A much more fitting metaphor indicating the character of his marvelous flight is the Wild Swan. The eagle *soars leisurely*, with much circling. Not so the wild swan. Direct as an arrow from the bow it goes, at a speed of a hundred miles an hour—dynamic, strong, purposeful. Lindbergh's flight was all of these.

It was a magnificent and active fight against the elements, not an indolent soaring in which time was no object.

Lindbergh's father was of Scandinavian blood; his mother is of English, Irish and French extraction; and her father was born in Canada. It was indeed dramatically and beautifully fitting that, in his immortal flight, the Viking of the Stars, starting from the land of his own birth, should pass over his mother's four countries—Canada, Ireland, England, France. The heroes mentioned in the poem represent the spirits and the ideals of the countries which cherish them.

"Children of Ymir"—In northern mythology Ymir is the Frost Giant. He is the son of mists and clouds.

"Blest of the Nornir"—The Nornir (or Norns) are the three Fates, as designated in Northern mythology. He who unites in himself youth, strength, comeliness, ability, modesty and singleheartedness in the pursuit of noble ideals is said to be "Blest of the Nornir." Surely never since first the morning stars sang together has that heartful tribute been more entirely merited than it is by The Wild Swan, Lindbergh, the Northman.

THE DREAM COME TRUE—Written on the occasion of Lindbergh's non-stop flight over Tacoma, Washington, en route to Portland, Oregon, on Wednesday, September 14, 1927.

THROUGH THE GATES OF TOMORROW—Eclipsing all previous flights across Pacific waters was that of the Southern Cross under the masterly handling of her crew of four: Captains Kingsford-Smith and Ulm, pilots; Lieutenant Lyon, navigator; Warner, radio operator. These intrepid

airmen, in their tri-motored Fokker monoplane, left Oakland, California, on June 1st, 1928, making but two ocean-landings—at Hawaii and the Fiji Islands—before reaching their goal at Sydney, Australia. During their magnificent and immortal adventure they crossed the International Date-Line, thus, in very truth, flying Through the Gates of Tomorrow.

THE WORLD A-WING—This poem does not attempt to do more than give a sketchy mention of some of the more extended and famous flights. It was inspired by tracing the flights, not on a flat map, but on a globe. To give one the "feel" of any journey—particularly a flight—nothing else is comparable to tracing the course of it on a globe. The achievements of Byrd and Amundsen at the North Pole; of Lindbergh, Byrd, Chamberlin, Fitzmaurice, Von Huenefeld, Koehl and others over the Atlantic; of Maitland, Hegenberger, Goebel, Jensen, Kingsford-Smith, Ulm, Lyon and Warner over the Pacific; De Pinedo in his great flight; Cobham in his epochal accomplishments; Hinkler in his daring England-Australia solo flight; Costes and Lebrix in their perilous itinerary; Captain Lancaster and Mrs. Keith Miller in their gallant and notable flight—all of these really live for one when traced upon a globe; no flat map can convey a hundredth part of the same comprehension of the reality and immensity of these undertakings.

For the benefit of any who may wish to obtain further information on the subject of aviation, there are many high class weekly and monthly magazines on the newsstands, such as U. S. Air Services, Western Flying, Aviation, Popular

Aviation, Aero Digest and others. The Aircraft Year Book (which can be seen in the reference department of any good Public Library) is a treasure house of valuable and intensely interesting information, in condensed form. Also write to the U. S. Department of Commerce, Aeronautics Branch, Washington, D. C., for information. On request, you will be put on their mailing list and their publicity matter will be sent to you regularly.

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